

## About Cemeteries

Lovely Shrines or Ghost Graveyards?  
Which Shall It Be?

**G. M. LUDWIG** During these experiences I was reminded of Dr. Clark L. Lamberton who tried to teach me early Christian history. Now, when Doctor Lamberton was working on his doctorate at Princeton university, he did not secure his information from dusty library stacks, but from the living past. This intricate system of tunnels and underground rooms extends all around Rome. (Lewiss in his *Barbarian* quotes them as being originally constructed by the early Christians mainly for their purposes—to hide from the enemies, to worship, and to bury their dead. After Christianity was accepted, these tunnels were used by the Romans for their military purposes. Men but were from time to time visited by robbers and pillagers. Eventually these underground halls became more or less filled with debris and dirt, until they were forgotten.)

In ancient times archaeologists have respond many miles of these tunnels to the study of the inscriptions and epitaphs along the sides of the walls. They were used as well as the amazing array of paintings of many who were recently buried to this day. Doctor Lamberton has written a thesis on the subject, "Themes from St. John's Gospel in Early Christian Catacombs Paintings."

Like all normal students, we often succeeded in detracting the professor from his main lectures and get him to tell of his experiences in history. I always assumed that a person soon becomes perfectly accimated to his new environment and soon sees no repulsion whatever. But Doctor Lamberton has answered us, "you will even die right in the midst of a pile of human bones to gain some interesting painting on the ceiling."

My experience during my recent pilgrimages was somewhat like this. Reading inscriptions on the tombstones of some of the early Christians in the catacombs is like many other jobs. The first day is the hardest, and I dare say to myself, "I can't do this." But this is true if you have to crawl along on hands and feet through webs and stones, and sometimes through holes deep enough, it seems to reach for them still here and there. Then there is the dirt from the dirt from a tombstone half buried in the ground or else knocked entirely over.

Forgetting for my purpose some of these ghost graveyards cleaned out. The hogs had killed the weeds and brush, had leveled off the graves, and had rubbed the tombstones bright and shiny so the inscriptions were easily read. Some of these were the inscriptions of war veterans, but that's all right. Humanity is an interesting species of animals. We eulogize our returning heroes, immortals that they are, but we also have the same desire to be remembered, and this induces no further obligation by erecting a marker, which apparently in some cases, serves well as a scratching post for hogs. HOW SOON WE FORGET.

Such descriptions of ancient cemetery conditions are the exception, however, and not the rule. Most of these silent and realistic archives of the past history of a community are in excellent condition. Happy, beyond expression, was I to discover, in most instances, very little damage to the stones, and the bones of the departed, half of the departed. A beautiful little wreath, freshly placed on a grave, told the story that somebody had remembered. In one instance, however, I found a wreath which had been placed over a beautiful token of devotion to a lost mother.

The Great cemetery in Union township was in fair condition. So also were the Unity cemetery in Union township, the Swank cemetery in Fremont township, and the Sulek cemetery in Jefferson township. These cemeteries are the ones that showed fine care and speak well of a community interest, even though in some instances the communities no longer revolved around a flourishing and large church.

I was greatly interested in the cemetery in the Evansville area, south of Lone Tree where the Evansville cemetery is buried. This cemetery is set in the main road, a situation quite common with cemeteries and other interesting facts about their surroundings. In this case, however, the long approach was clean and well fenced and the cemetery was regularly mowed with the lawn mower.

In most cases where the cemetery trustees would not permit a regular mowing, the have merely defined and created a program was maintained, nevertheless, to keep the burial ground respectable and attractive. Take for instance the Hala cemetery in Monroe township. The cemetery is very small, but may we visit the burial ground and it looked remarkably clean and well kept even though the lawn mower was not regularly used.

The Amish and Mennonite cemeteries, with one exception, are also well preserved. Never showing the overgrowth represented in slate state towns, the cemetery in the town of Andover, in Monroe township, is a good example. The Amish cemetery in the town of Lone Tree, or the St. Peter's or St. Paul's in Cedar township, these cemeteries, nevertheless, are attractive because of their simplicity, order, and quiet.

The somberies particularly attracted my attention. One of these is the North Liberty cemetery which always looks fine. This is situated on a hill overlooking the North Bend valley. Anybody desiring a spot from which to observe the tools of the generations still living and the dead, should not be disappointed.

If you like a cemetery that suggests quiet and repose you might visit the Pleasant Hill cemetery at Amish. This cemetery, like that at North Liberty, is well preserved.

As a first choice, I must select the Bain cemetery, a short distance southwest of Swisher. The old little burial place is in need of some attention, but the trees and shrubs are well cared for and fresh exposed. As I first caught sight of this cool little plot, segregated from the crows and the hawks of modern life, I felt overcome with a deep feeling of quiet and repose. The trees, too, are well kept, though, however, a better gardener. The velvety green turf, the beautiful flower beds, the neatly trimmed shrubbery, the excellent

**Johnson County**

**FROST BEFORE OCT. 1 WOULD HURT 60 PCT.**

BY G. M. LUDWIG  
Associated Press Staff Writer

**IOWA FAIR**

BY KNOX CRAIG  
Associated Press Staff Writer

**SURPLUS FARM LAND**

Anyone interested in some of the more than 1,000 surplus farms comprising the orchard plants at Des Moines and Burlington, which were taken over by the government at the start of the war will have to talk with Uncle Sam. Defense plant corporations are holding the Des Moines plant, building, equipment, farm land and all, as a unit, or it may be broken up in parcels so a farmer could buy land without having to buy equipment. The government has understood the war department was still seriously considering holding the Burlington plant as a reserve.

**BEAN HARVEST**

Anyone interested in the start harvesting its second largest soybean harvest since the start of the war. Predictions are that the yield will be equal to last year's record crop of 1,120,000 acres which yielded some 40,000,000 bushels. Prior to 1942 Iowa was very far behind in its production. A heavy harvest is expected especially in the north-central area.

**LINSE SPREADING**

If early 1945 figures indicate a trend, the farmers in the state will equal the more than 2,000,000 tons of lime they spread on their farms last year. Farmers throughout the state are busy now spreading lime, and in July 20 of this year, 184,131 tons of lime were delivered through AAA contracts to farmers, compared to 183,449 last year, with the latter part of the year with Nov. per-farm, or an average of 240 acres. . . .

**Face Corn Shortage**

Farmers in Johnson county are having a hard time buying corn for their feeding operations, according to Emmet C. Gardner, county extension director. Some farmers are buying several hundred bushels of corn, and several thousand turkeys can hardly find corn enough anywhere that can be bought to feed their livestock. As a result, some livestock will be sold light and many will cut down on their feeding to get through this fall for spring farrow.

When corn is located in or out of the county the price of the feeder is required to pay varies as much as 20 cents per bushel.

conditions of the surrounding fence, all add so wonderfully to the natural setting, so that the most meticulous critic would have to visit the beautiful shrine some time towards the evening when the shadows lengthen and become mellow, or later still when . . .

**Heaven is touching earth with rest.**

But what about these ghost graveyards? Do not these also contain graves of men, women, and children, of a bygone age, that too are honorable and worthy? Many of these people had little money, but the love of their God and the love of their neighbors was strong, and their suffering and death of people just like them. Shall we deserve their memory by our pitiful indifference? Has Iowa land, first considered to be a barren wasteland, become a land of opportunity so that we can no longer afford to set aside these few sacred spots as a memorial to those instrumental in giving it its present value? Why not revere them on a little place as these shrines. Or are we too close to the world, too close to the flesh, to care about the crumpling skeletons when old bones remain, covering the crumpling skeletons over their sacred dust?

Copyright © 2022 Newspapers.com. All Rights Reserved.

POWERED BY  
**Newspapers**™  
.com